

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 MUSCAT 00507 110643Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15
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R 110407Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4223
INFO: RUQMHR/AMEMBASSY TEHRA N 420
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY SANA

S E C R E T MUSCAT 0507

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDIP, PEPR, MU
SUBJECT: FAREWELL AUDIENCE WITH SULTAN

REF: STATE 90554 (NOTAL)

1. SULTAN QABOOS RECEIVED ME ALONE FOR 20 MINUTES
APRIL 9 AT MUSCAT PALACE. I CONGRATULATED HIM AND
HIS GOVERNMENT ON THE IMPRESSIVE PROGRESS I HAVE WIT-
NESSED IN OMAN DURING NEARLY 4 YEARS HERE. THE MILI-
TARY VICTORY IN THE SOUTH AND THE STRIDES UNDER 5-
YEAR PLAN WERE EVIDENCE OF ADVANCES BOTH IN SECURITY
AND DEVELOPMENT. BEYOND THAT, THE GROWING COOPERATION
OF VARIOUS GULF STATES IN SECURITY AND, PARTICULARLY, EC-
ONOMIC MATTERS WAS SOMETHING I APPLAUDED BASED ON EARLIER
SERVICE IN KUWAIT AND SAUDI ARABIA. I WAS CONFIDENT
THIS PROGRESS WOULD CONTINUE. QABOOS THANKED
ME AND AGREED GULF COOPERATION IS ESSENTIAL ALTHOUGH
UNFORTUNATELY SOME LEADERS WERE SLOW TO THE NEED.

2. I SPOKE BRIEFLY OF USG DETERMINATION TO CONTINUE
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STRIVING FOR JUST AND DURABLE ARAB-ISRAELI PEACE, NOTING
THAT IN THIS REGARD WE HAVE VALUED SULTAN'S COUNSEL AND
MODERATION AND WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO. THIS PROMPTED
RESPONSE BY QABOOS ALONG FOLLOWING LINES. ONLY TO YOU,
HE REMARKED, AND PERHAPS ONE OR TWO OTHER AMBASSADORS
HERE WOULD I SAY THIS. I REALLY THINK THE RABAT SUMMIT
WAS UNFORTUNATE. BY VALIDATING PLO AS SOLE SPOKESMAN

FOR THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE, WHICH IN MY OPINION IT IS NOT, THE TASK OF MODERATES SUCH AS JORDAN AND EGYPT IN DEALING WITH THE SITUATION HAS BEEN MADE EXCEEDINGLY DIFFICULT. THOSE WHO SAY IT IS A TERRORIST ORGANIZATION ARE ESSENTIALLY RIGHT, AND PLO ACTIVITIES IN SEVERAL GULF STATES ARE POTENTIALLY VERY HARMFUL, AS SHAYKH RASHID OF DUBAI RECENTLY TOLD ME. RASHID SPOKE WITH CONCERN OF A RECENT PLO CAMPAIGN IN ABU DHABI USING PAMPHLETS AND PRESSURES. I HOPE, SAID QABOOS, THAT SOME-TIME, SOMEHOW, THOSE PALESTINIANS LIVING UNDER ISRAELI OCCUPATION COULD HAVE A CHANCE TO CHOOSE THE LEADERS THEY REALLY WANT TO SPEAK FOR THEM. BUT IN MEANTIME I FEAR THE PLO, AS IT HAS THE ARMS AND MANY OPERATIVES WHO HAVE MADE IT A CAREER, WILL CONTINUE TO CAUSE TROUBLE JUST WHEN IT CAN BE MOST DISASTROUS TO EFFORTS AND HOPES FOR PEACE. WE WILL NOT ALLOW PLO A FOOTHOLD HERE, HE DECLARED, THOUGH SOME LIP SERVICE WILL HAVE TO BE PAID.

3. QABOOS TURNED TO PROBLEMS IN THE HORN, EXPRESSING TREPIDATION AT SOMALIA PRESIDENT SIAD BARRE'S "EVER-WEAKENING" POSITION AND FEAR THAT DJIBOUTI WOULD BE SWALLOWED UP BY ETHIOPIANS ONCE THEIR SOVIET ARMS ARE FULLY DIGESTED, UNLESS ETHIOPIAN REGIME ENCOUNTERS TOO MANY INTERNAL PROBLEMS. BUT FIRST, HE SAID, IT LOOKS LIKE ETHIOPIA WITH HELP OF CUBANS WILL TRY TO FINISH OFF ERITREAN SEPARATIST GROUPS. SULTAN THEN PREDICTED,

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SOMEWHAT TO MY SURPRISE, THAT HE THOUGHT SOVIETS MIGHT SEND CUBAN TROOPS HOME FROM ETHIOPIA BEFORE TOO LONG, I.E. WHENEVER ETHIOPIAN ARMY IS FAMILIAR WITH RUSSIAN EQUIPMENT SUPPLIED OVER PAST MONTHS. HE SPECULATED THAT THEN SOVIETS MIGHT TRY TO GET ETHIOPIANS TO DO THEIR DIRTY WORK IN NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES INCLUDING NORTH YEMEN. I TOLD QABOOS THAT HOWEVER THINGS DEVELOPED HE COULD BE SURE USG IS DEVOTING MUCH TIME AND ATTENTION TO ASSESSING SOVIET ACTIVITIES IN AFRICA AND WOULD WELCOME FURTHER CONSULTATIONS WITH OTHERS CONCERNED, INCLUDING OMAN.

4. I CONCLUDED BY EXPRESSING DEEP APPRECIATION FOR UN-FAILING ASSISTANCE AND FRIENDSHIP OF SULTAN'S GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE FOR ME AND MY FAMILY SINCE 1974, WHICH HAD ASSISTED MY DUTIES NO END AND MADE THEM A PLEASURE TO PERFORM.

5. COMMENT. I WAS STRUCK BY SULTAN'S FAILURE TO PUR-SUE HIS DISCOURSE IN PARA 3 TO WHAT MIGHT HAVE SEEMED LIKELY CONCLUSION THAT OMAN ITSELF IS IN FOR EARLY TROUBLE IN DHOFAR BECAUSE OF PRESSURES FROM PDRY AIDED BY ONE OR ANOTHER OF ITS COMMUNIST ALLIES. FACT HE

DID NOT DO SO SEEMS A FURTHER INDICATION (SEE MUSCAT 0417)

THAT OMAN DOES NOT SEE THAT HAPPENING IN NEAR FUTURE.

WOLLE

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NNN

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